

VZCZCXRO0151  
RR RUEHAST RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHPB RUEHPOD RUEHTM  
DE RUEHCP #0538/01 2810951  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 070951Z OCT 08 ZDS  
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4499  
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RHEBAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA 0846  
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS 1634  
RUEHTL/AMEMBASSY TALLINN 1528  
RUEHLN/AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG 0329  
RUEHRK/AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK 0461  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 5538  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 8972  
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 3868  
RUEHAG/AMCONSUL HAMBURG 0045  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1430  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0656  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0535  
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0088  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0260  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0059  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0077  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 0993  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0147  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA  
RUEHOR/AMEMBASSY GABORONE 0019  
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0059  
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA 0010  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 0021  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 COPENHAGEN 000538

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - F O R M A T T I N G

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KGHG](#) [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [DA](#)

SUBJECT: NORDICS INTERESTED IN RENEWABLE ENERGY  
PARTNERSHIP WITH U.S.

REF: A. 06 COPENHAGEN 273

[1](#)B. COPENHAGEN 499

COPENHAGEN 00000538 001.4 OF 005

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: The Department's initiative to explore interest among Nordic governments and research communities in a Nordic-U.S. partnership on renewable energy research and development has been welcomed in Nordic capitals and by the Nordic Council of Ministers. We welcome this Department initiative and will continue to work with other Nordic posts in support of creation of a regional partnership. Should the partnership be established, we urge consideration be given to involving the Baltic states in some way. End Summary.

Background  
-----

[1](#)2. (U) This initiative grew out of the results of the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) of March, 2008. Nordic governments were particularly prominent in the WIREC events, highlighting national accomplishments and commitment to renewable energy development and deployment. In working groups, Nordic leaders invited U.S. collaboration to help spur research and development efforts needed to bring new low-carbon energy technologies to market. The Nordic/Baltic ESTH hub office has long advocated regional collaboration on renewable energy (Ref A).

[1](#)3. (U) In response to this interest, the Department formed an exploratory team led by OES/STC and including Jefferson Fellow Dr. Purusottam Jena to develop the concept of a U.S.-Nordic regional partnership on renewable energy R&D (tentatively entitled "NUCORE").

The team visited all five Nordic capitals in August/September to gauge interest. REO was invited to join Washington-based visitors during their initial field consultations. Franklin Fellow Thomas Burns joined the group for their visit to Reykjavik. At each stop in a Nordic capital, the OES team met with Embassy officials including the DCM and/or Ambassador, with government representatives, and with key renewable energy researchers to discuss the NUCORE concept.

¶4. (U) The regional partnership would involve building on (and being careful not to detract from) existing successful bilateral cooperation efforts with Nordic countries, including the "One Big Thing" (OBT) alternative energy technology initiative with Sweden, and existing bilateral cooperation with Iceland on geothermal energy, with Finland on biomass, with Danish research institutions on wind power and energy

COPENHAGEN 00000538 002.4 OF 005

storage, and working with Norway on hydropower and carbon sequestration and capture technologies. It could also include an educational component designed to strengthen educational exchange in renewable energy (in Sweden, a Fulbright professorship has been created at Chalmers University under the OBT initiative, funded by the Wallenberg Foundation), and might also consider ways to transfer renewable energy expertise to other nations outside the Nordic region.

Copenhagen Sees Benefits  
-----

¶5. (SBU) Government representatives from the Danish Energy Authority and the Ministry of Science told the visitors on August 20 that the government desired to 'internationalize' Danish research into wind, biomass and hydrogen. The Danes cited an initiative announced by the Nordic prime ministers (note: at Riksgården 8-9 April 2008; see [www.norden2008.se](http://www.norden2008.se)) promising additional Nordic collaboration on renewable energy. They raised as potential challenges the issues of joint financing (most Danish research funding is controlled by independent boards) and IPR. Key researchers from the RISØ national laboratory and the Danish Technical University, the Univ. of Copenhagen, the Univ. of Aarhus and industry told us that although Europe, not the Nordic region, is today the natural frame of reference for Danish research collaboration, Danish researchers are happy to collaborate with the best researchers anywhere. They uniformly preferred direct collaboration with the U.S. to working through the EU, citing Brussels bureaucracy. Danish researchers described their vision of a cooperative "triple helix" approach to innovation, involving partnership between government, academia and industry.

Stockholm Guardedly Positive  
-----

¶6. (SBU) In meetings in Stockholm on August 21, key researchers from Uppsala University, the Royal Institute of Technology, Linköping Univ., Chalmers Univ., and Lund University described current research collaboration among the Nordics as fragmented, with "pitiable" levels of funding. One Swedish researcher expressed concern about the difficulty and danger of mixing "visionary" basic researchers (in his case, studying artificial photosynthesis) with those focused more on applied research (mainly from industry). Others saw value in increased educational exchange with U.S. researchers. On the government side, we met with representatives of the Swedish Energy Agency, the

COPENHAGEN 00000538 003.4 OF 005

Innovation Directorate of the Energy Ministry, and a representative of the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA). Of greatest concern to the government was how any new partnership would affect ongoing bilateral cooperation. Assured that existing cooperation under the "One Big Thing" initiative would not be affected, they suggested that the initiative would be easier to implement if it involved new funding. They also suggested U.S. coordination with

the Nordic Council of Ministers.

#### Helsinki Enthusiastic

¶7. (SBU) We met in Helsinki on August 25 with the State Secretary of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, representatives from the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, the Academy of Finland and with key researchers from the Helsinki Institute of Technology, Helsinki Univ., and the Univ. of Jyvaskyla. The Finns strongly supported further cooperation with the U.S. on clean technology research. They believed Finland has a lot to offer in terms of applied expertise-particularly in nanotechnology and biomass research. They acknowledged having less experience in marketing these items to international markets, and therefore saw great opportunity in collaborating with Americans.

#### Oslo Interested Too

¶8. (SBU) In Oslo we met on August 27 with the MFA and the Norwegian Research Council, and the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate; and with researchers from the Univ. of Oslo, the Norwegian Univ. of Science and Technology, the Centre for Renewable Energy and several renewable energy industries (Rock Energy, Hydro, and Renewable Energy Corp.). As elsewhere, researchers and policy-makers expressed interest in the idea of regional collaboration with the U.S., emphasizing Norwegian comparative advantage in hydropower and carbon storage technologies, and even in solar photovoltaic production technology. They also suggested further coordination with the Nordic Council of Ministers.

#### Reykjavik Reaction

¶9. (SBU) Consultations in Reykjavik September 25-26 involved MFA and National Energy Authority officials and key researchers from the

COPENHAGEN 00000538 004.4 OF 005

Univ. of Iceland, the Renewable Energy School at the Univ. of Akureyri, the Global Center, and the Iceland Innovation Center. An NEA official expressed hope that a U.S.-Nordic partnership might help alleviate a research bottle-neck, attracting more scholars to the field. Others expressed hope a partnership could overcome an "invisible wall (between researchers) down the Atlantic" and encourage or simplify research funding. Icelanders expressed hope that bureaucracy could be minimized in any partnership. In addition to geothermal energy, Iceland is pioneering hydrogen use in transportation, and experimenting with carbon sequestration and carbon recycling from aluminum smelting. An international deep drilling geothermal project involves the NSF, U.C. Riverside, and Alcoa, among others. The DCM suggested using the Fulbright program to increase renewable energy educational exchange.

#### Nordic Council Welcomes Collaboration

¶10. (SBU) DCM and REO met with Nordic Council of Ministers SecGen Halldor Asgrimsson on September 18 to inquire whether, should interest on the part of all Nordic nations be confirmed, the Council would be interested in exploring avenues for collaboration with the U.S. in this particular area (Ref B). The DCM described U.S. interest in international collaboration to foster renewable energy technology research and development, and growing interest in partnering with the Nordic region in this effort. Asgrimsson said he had been made aware of initial U.S. exploratory efforts in the region, and signaled strong NCM interest in future collaboration in this promising area. The SecGen told us the Council supports a Nordic Energy Research effort based in Oslo which funds projects in targeted areas including renewable energy and energy efficiency; it has made efforts to coordinate bio-energy research through its Forestry Council and the Council supports research projects in wind, bio-energy, carbon sinks, and carbon storage and sequestration.

#### Next Steps

¶11. (SBU) All five Nordic governments have welcomed the opportunity to nominate members of a working group to meet later this year to begin planning for a comprehensive workshop to take place around May 2009. They are awaiting an invitation to do so from the

COPENHAGEN 00000538 005.4 OF 005

Department. Should further collaboration with the Nordic Council be desired, Embassy Copenhagen stands ready to assist with communication with the Council secretariat in Copenhagen.

Comment  
-----

¶12. (SBU) Though many questions remain to be addressed in further stages of the exploratory process, initial reaction to the Department's initiative within the region has been overwhelmingly positive. All five governments and lead researchers are willing to take next exploratory steps. The "open door" offered by the Nordic Council of Ministers could help simplify collaboration by tapping existing Nordic networks. In addition, all of our embassies in the Nordic region have welcomed the initiative, with the proviso that new regional cooperation not hinder any existing bilateral efforts. If a U.S.-Nordic partnership can be achieved in 2009, it would be useful to highlight that effort in the run-up to the COP-15 UN climate summit in December 2009. If successful, a U.S.-Nordic partnership might offer a model for further cooperation with other countries or regions, including the Baltic republics.

CAIN